Listing of Claims:

There are no amendments to the claims, however, this listing is provided for the convenience of the Examiner. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Original) A method for storing data comprising the step of storing first information with first data, wherein the first information directly indicates the status of the first data.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the status indicates a reliability of the first data.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the first information is a data reliability qualifier bit.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein the first information is embedded with the first data.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the first information is appended with the first data.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of storing second information with second data, the second information indicating the status of the first data.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein the second information is set to indicate that the first data is unreliable.

8. (Original) A method for protecting data comprising the step of accompanying first information with first data, wherein the first information indicates status of second data associated with the first data.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the status indicates a reliability of the second data.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the first information is a data reliability qualifier.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the first data is parity data.

12. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the first information is set to indicate that the second data is unreliable.

13. (Original) The method of claim 8 further comprising the step of storing second information to the second data, the second information indicating the status of the second data.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein the second information is set to indicate that the second data is unreliable.

15. (Original) An apparatus comprising:

storage areas; and

circuitry configured to perform at least one of a group consisting of a reading and a
writing of the storage areas, wherein at least one of the storage areas includes first
information accompanying first data, wherein the first information indicates
status of second data associated with the first data.

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15 wherein the circuitry includes a controller
that is adapted to store the first information with the first data.

17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15 wherein at least another of the storage areas
includes second information stored with the second data that indicates a status of the second
data.

18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 17 wherein the storage areas are in a RAID
configuration.

19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15 wherein the first information is appended to
the first data.

20. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15 wherein the first information is embedded
in the first data.

21. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15 wherein the first information and the first
data are generated by the same function.